Bonebrake Theological Seminary

TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

These Papers

BECAUSE of wartime printing conditions, it has been found necessary to issue TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH as a bulletin without regular monthly frequency. We expect, however, to be able to make available a series of informal papers, and to print nine of these issues in the course of twelve months, as we had planned and promised. The Committee on Town and Country of the Home Missions Council and the Federal Council of Churches asks you to be patient if copies do not arrive regularly.

Brief stories of what people are doing in local congregations and communities will be the chief features. The aim is to help put the worker in the small community into touch with numerous activities.

Part of Larger Program

The paper will be an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program," that will encourage a national "rural church movement." The paper will be closely linked with a regularly held National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country.

This Issue
No. 11
Published October, 1944

Some Parish Methods

Including Barbering and Social Work

GEORGE B. GILBERT

• If you were to be with us some Sunday morning I would hope you'd feel like the member of the Pentecostal Church who was a visitor a few weeks ago. "Why," he said, "I knew this was a real Christian church the moment I came in the door. Everyone looked so happy!" That's what we try to make it—a happy, cheerful church.

We cordially greet everybody as soon as they drive up. If the service has begun someone slips out to greet them and sees that they have a good seat and books. If they happen to be Congregationalist, for example, you would never put them up front, because they wouldn't know when to get up or sit down.

Informal Greetings

We almost always have an informal greeting time when all are in the pews. It takes only a jiffy and sort of sets a happy family tone for what is to come. "Glad to see you, Chestnut Hill! Our old friends from New Haven are here! And I declare if East Hartford hasn't come some forty miles to worship with us and pass the day."

The church service itself—which is Episcopal—is dignified and orderly, but nevertheless bright and cheerful, for people must go home chippered up for the work and care and labor of the week. We believe that "Fellowship in Christ and with one another" makes a church. So we have not gone home for over 30 years without a "cup of coffee" together. What a good time we have around the tables in the parish rooms partitioned off from the church auditorium!

One Family

A family that comes to mind is a real good-sized one. There are 13 children in it, and for the last dozen years or so it has been on our list. You see we work largely by families, visiting them, just as the doctor would, according to their need. Often a little helping start will do wonders for a family. I raised $25 and got this man a quite usable Ford car. With this he could look for work and he found work.

Things picked up slowly and I fixed the pump. I got a teakettle, a big kettle for potatoes, a big restaurant size double boiler (my what good use they are still making of that!), a table so that they could eat at one time, extra beds, etc. Seven of these children have now been confirmed in the church. Several times we have had 14 from this family in church. Never a child went home from church without a good dinner either.

Another family comes to mind. The mother had never been inside the rural school house, not even for Christmas, during the 24 years she had sent children there. You get to be their friend. You are at perfect ease in their kitchens. (We need more kitchen religion and less of the parlor variety.) You become their confidential friend. It doesn't take money necessarily.

The Things They Need

You help to find things they need, to be had in a way they can afford. In this case a better stove, a better eating table, a hanging lamp, some chairs, get the barn shingled, get a good chimney instead of the old, get

—Courtesy of Rural Life Association

some good seed potatoes, and at last and perhaps best of all, a cow. It wasn't long before this whole family went with others in my big car to attend the morning service in the Cathedral in Hartford. We all had dinner in the Parish house and visited the big city airport afterwards.

Of course they had a haircut, for I have been the barber for this and innumerable other families for more than forty years. The barbers' kit, apron and all, is never left at home, Sundays or any other days.

My job is to build up a civilization of all sorts and conditions and races. With an extension phone by the bed, the people in 100 square miles know there is not an hour of a year where there is not a place they can come or phone in regard to any trouble under heaven.

—From *The Church in Action Series,* National Broadcasting Company, in cooperation with the Federal Council of Churches.

Convocation Notes

Elgin, Ill., November 14-16, 1944

1. General sessions and headquarters in the First Methodist Church, Elgin, Ill.
2. Free lodging the nights of November 14 and 15.
3. Plan to arrive early November 14, and stay through.
4. Everyone interested is invited to attend, but you must write us prior to October 15, giving denomination and probable time of arrival.
5. Everyone attending is invited to choose one of the commissions and attend all of its sessions.
6. Write us for extra copies of the program, free.
7. Be sure to invite lay people, men, women, youth.

Protestant Relief Work

• American Protestants will be called upon by their churches to give $2,670,000 for their united overseas relief and reconstruction projects during 1944-45, according to an announcement just issued by Leslie Bates Moss, Executive Director of the Church Committee on Overseas Relief and Reconstruction. This represents an increase of about 50 per cent over the amount given for the same type of program last year.

From a Pastor's Diary

• Today I felt that I should pay a pastoral call to a family on the south side of our parish, who have been caught up in the fundamentalist controversy and are more or less on the "outs" with our church. What I was going to say to them I really did not know. But as I drove along the road I kept praying that I might have the right words to speak at the right time.

As I drove into the farm yard I saw the husband coming from the north pasture. I walked across the lawn to meet him. As we shook hands the look in his eyes told me that something was radically wrong. As friends do, we passed the time of day and then I asked, "Have you had any news from Kenny?"

Missing in Action

Kenneth was an only son in this family of five children. He had been drafted a year ago. There had been a brief training period, a ten-day furlough in September, and then off to North Africa and the Italian invasion. On March 12 they had received a letter from him which he had written just a month before. I knew they had received no word since.

To my question the father replied, "We had a telegram this morning from the Government, saying that Kenneth was missing in action." After a few words we went to the house where the mother was trying to hold down her grief by working vigorously at the family ironing.

We sat in the parlor and talked about Kenneth. A fine Christian lad only 19 years old. Clean in speech and habit. No outstanding talents but gracious, courteous, loving and wholesome. The type that would not purposely hurt any one.

Comforting Words

I tried to find words to comfort them. He was missing. On the Italian front. He might be a German prisoner. They would give him fair treatment. But even as I spoke these things I was aware that he might have stepped on a mine and been blown to bits.

The Scripture that came to mind as we talked were the words of Jesus to His disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me." I tried to share these words with them, and we bowed our heads in prayer to the Father with whom there are no accidents.

In a little while I left them, myself sick at heart. For Ken was one of "my boys." One summer I had camped with him and ten other boys for a whole week. We had played evenings in the church hall and I had coached him in church dramas. I had taught him in the Sunday School and led him in the sanctuary worship. For six years we were together—and then for a year we had corresponded while he was in service.

A Great Work to Do

As I drove away I thought of the problem that had prompted my call. In the light of the telegram his parents had received how inconsequential, how incongruous it now seemed. Christians at loggerheads over theological questions when human hearts were breaking. Talk about Nero fiddling while Rome burned! He was a piker compared to some of us. A whole world going up in flames, hearts bruised, crushed, bleeding—looking to us for help and we are arguing points of theology. O God, in Thy unlimited mercy, forgive us.

Going on to the hospital to make another call I thought of how once the enemies of God had sent emissaries to Nehemiah as he builded the walls of Jerusalem, saying to him, "Come let us meet together in some one of the villages of the plain of Ono." But wise and courageous Nehemiah said, "I am doing a great work so that I can not come down. Why should the work cease whilst I leave it and come down to you?"

—C. R. McBride

Family Farming

(Editorial in the *New York Times*, July 10, 1944)

• It is part of our nation's tradition that rural economy be based on the small farm. Now that science is entering agricultural production, some groups are alarmed lest the farming philosophy of Jefferson be eliminated. Certain planners favor the large-scale, corporation type of agriculture. Great acreages, machine handled, with "factories-in-the-fields" philosophy and management, will undoubtedly find a place in the national economy in the same way that great companies have made certain products available to the masses at reasonable prices.

But four factors are largely in operation which will help family farming hold its own. *First,* as soon as the war is won the farm-machinery manufacturers are ready to build small machines to fit the 174-acre size of the average farm in this country. Machine power of efficient size will remove the handicap which horse and mule farmers have suffered. Each horse or mule means that a farm uses from three to five acres of good soil to provide hay and grain for its power. This acreage will be released for production by small power units.

Second, the nation's 6,000,000 farms will gradually become electrified. Aside from the comforts it will bring to rural living, the economic result will be that the farms can be operated more efficiently. Time saved from chores can be given to production. Electric power will enable a general farmer to grind his own grains. Home-grown grains encourage diversification based on livestock farming, the safest and most profitable set-up for the average farm.

The *third* reason for optimism is the increase of cooperative buying and selling. Farmers are individualistic by nature, but in the last twenty years notable progress in cooperation has been achieved. When farmers learn how to handle cooperatives it will remove a major part of the worst economic handicap American agriculture has faced: that is, buying at retail and selling at wholesale. American industry has proved that mass production at small profit per unit is a sound basis of economy.

Finally, American farming stands at the threshold of a new era in regard to the industrial use of farm crops. Chemurgy is a new field, but the war has advanced its horizon to a degree unrealized by the general public. Many products hitherto thought of in terms of human and animal foods will in the future be raw materials for industry. The traditional family farm will work out its place in the scheme of national agricultural economy.

—*Courtesy of J. S. Russell, Des Moines Register*

Jewish Farmers Give Gift to Nation

• The Jewish farmers living in and about the Columbia and Hebron districts in Eastern Connecticut had been buying war bonds, contributing to the Red Cross and meeting every other request. They wished to do something more, however, and collected funds for an ambulance. During the summer the United States Army Medical Corps made acknowledgment of the gift.

At a well attended public ceremony Christian neighbors were present in large numbers, along with the dairy and poultry farmers of the Jewish group. The ceremony took place, appropriately enough, at Yeoman's Hall.

"Larger Parish"

• The Committee on Town and Country announces the publication of an interdenominational edition of the booklet *Life in the Larger Parish,* by Miss Margaret J. Harris. Miss Harris has been identified with the larger parish centering at Van Hornesville, New York. Special emphasis is given to the work in religious education, but the entire larger parish program is described. Copies are available from the office of the Committee on Town and Country, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., at 25c for single copies postpaid. Make checks payable to the Home Missions Council.

Post-War Plans

• The Friendship Press, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., is publishing for eight interdenominational agencies a booklet describing their post-war plans. It was compiled by the Inter-Council Committee on Post-War Planning. Single copies are 25c each postpaid.

The Ultimate Economics

• "Ultimately we shall have an economics of economic realities. It will be an economics that recognizes that all human permanence rests on the soil, and the manpower that utilizes the soil and protects it."

—Alvin Johnson in *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology,* April, 1944

The Church and Rural Agencies

JAMES D. WYKER

• Since the church has turned its attention to the Holy Earth, there is much hope that rural religion will revive. Many preachers see in agriculture one channel through which God transmits his character to his children. The divine mysteries of seed and harvest were used by our Master for his greatest illustrations. These eternal truths make a philosophy which leads the country church into the total life of the people. This includes education, economics, recreation, conservation, government, and social life. The minister helps his people restore the native values of the soil.

Adult Education

Wherever the minister sees a need in the secular area he should plant seeds that will bring a harvest. It may be a problem which needs study by the people before they are competent to help themselves, such as small-loan credit. He can call a few neighbors together and study until they arise to solve the small loan problem by setting up a credit union. Perhaps the minister sees the underprivileged half of his community unreached with Christian instruction.

If he thinks week-day religious education is the answer, he can gather the local facts and the story of how other places do it; then present the situation to reliable citizens in the community. Without the support of public approval, the minister and the school superintendent will have difficulty in such a new departure.

Developing Leadership

A live community church takes its place along with the school and farm agencies in sponsoring and training leaders. If leadership is passed around, a good country church will require fifty persons to fill its offices. At an early age the young people will begin to operate their own church affairs and frequently have tasks in the adult program. Being small, rural churches require a larger percentage of their people to take leadership, than do city congregations. Moreover, all the country church staff is voluntary, excepting the minister. When people prove their ability to lead in the church, somebody soon suggests their name for an office in some other organization.

Community Counseling

The church offers its highest level of leadership to the people when its minister and Sunday school superintendent sit down frequently with the heads of the other community agencies in what is known as a community council of character building agencies. These heads are not delegated by their organizations, but meet voluntarily to talk about the community welfare and to create public opinion. The minister should be just another member of this council. He sits with his colleagues in counsel. He may be surprised how much he can learn from these practical citizens of affairs outside the church. Such a procedure may humble the cloth, but it is democratic. Most any subject may be discussed in such a council, from a united rat extermination project to gifts for the boys in service at Christmas.

Use of Equipment

Barriers should be let down between agencies in the use of equipment. Buildings and furnishings are the contribution of our forefathers to us and our children. A church basement or parish house may be just as serviceable to the Lord when used by the young people for a 4H banquet as for a Christian Endeavor party. The school gym may benefit the out of school church youth group quite as much as the basket ball team. A free exchange of equipment saves the community from duplication of expensive equipment, accommodates everybody, promotes friendliness, and introduces non-church people to the idea of Christian fellowship.

Town & Country Church

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Remit to the Home Missions Council

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The following persons with responsibility for town and country church in the religious bodies and interdenominational agencies constitute the *Board of Editors:*

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Farms, Farmers, and Churches

Is the Church Realistic?

TED H. TOWNSEND

Less Farms, Less Farmers

• The number of farms in New York State is on the decline. At the time of the Civil War there were according to census figures 170,000 farms. The peak was reached in 1885, when 241,000 farms were listed.

Since that date, there has been a steady decline in both the number of farms and the number of acres of improved land. The figures taken from the U. S. Census are as follows:

Date	*Farms*
1885	241,000
1910	215,500
1920	193,195
1930	159,800
1940	153,235

There are now 88,000 fewer farms (and 7,000,000 less acres of improved land) than in 1885. The loss in the number of acres of improved land keeps pace with the loss in the number of farms.

Production at Peak

Crop production in the year 1942 was the greatest on record. This was due in part to a wonderful growing season. Weather conditions were ideal. A drive was also made in order to grow as much food as possible for the armed forces as well as for civilian needs. Record crops were harvested in spite of the fact that many farm employees had entered the armed forces of our Government or had gone to work in industrial plants carrying on defense work.

A Comparison

Since the peak in 1885 New York State has 88,000 fewer farms and seven million less acres of improved land. Yet in the year 1942 crop production was at a new record level.

What is the answer to this apparent paradox? The difference comes as a natural result of the machine age which started with the introduction of the harvester and other pieces of farm machinery which turned out to be labor-saving devices.

I have it from the historian of Chemung County, N. Y., an octogenarian. He tells how a day's farm work was shortened to an hour by the introduction of first the harvester and then the combine. He says, "I can remember how grain used to be cut with a scythe and cradle. It took a good man to cut and cradle two acres a day. It took an extra good man to follow along with a hand rake to tie and shock the bundles of grain. After that came the big job of threshing with the flail and hand windmill.

"I should say it took a day to cradle, shock and thresh an acre of grain. Today with the combine we do the same job—thresh, reap and bag the grain right on the machine —at the rate of an acre an hour."

The tractor, the farm truck, the potato digger, the hay loader all have taken a permanent place in our agriculture set-up, displacing man power and making farm work easier to carry on. The "machine age" is here to stay.

The Rural Youth

The growth of a productive rural America depends on our ability to pass the soil on to young people who love rural life and who are endowed by training and by nature to strengthen it. It is a most important problem that we establish on the farms the *youth best-fitted for farming.*

Due to the use of farm machinery there just isn't the place today for all farm boys to stay at home. It is a tragedy for a boy to stay on the farm unless that farm has reasonable possibilities. All "marginal lands" such as the tops of hills and lands adjacent to the mountains should be eliminated from consideration as they cannot be farmed profitably.

We need some sort of a program to help young people who love the farm stay on the land and work land which can be farmed profitably.

Our Church

The rural church is affected by the present trend in agriculture. In many of the areas where the land is not profitable to farm, we have church buildings. Because there is a building we often feel it necessary to "call" a pastor. Yet if we study the area we can readily see that there will be less and less farms which means less and less people to draw on for a congregation.

We as church officers perhaps can take a lesson from the central school. Surveys are made and a new central school building is planned. As a part of the program, the one- and two-room schools which dot the area are eliminated. They are torn down or sold, and as a result, within a few years all of the activities are brought together in the new modern school building.

Facing the Problem

A church building should not be the only reason for having a pastor in the particular area. If there are not enough people to keep the charge going, if the area is on marginal land, where there will be less and less productive farms in the future, which means a diminishing population, perhaps we should consider closing the present edifice.

How many "out charges" do we have today in these areas where ten years from now there will only be half as many farms? With good roads and automobiles in the post-war period, couldn't people be brought a greater distance to a larger, more efficient, better-organized church? Shouldn't we study the farm population trends as we lay out our church areas? An enthusiastic people may carry on for a time. Eventually, however, it will be necessary for them to consider what the machine age has brought to our rural areas:

Larger crops on level fertile fields, the abandonment of many hillside and hill top farms, have their effect on the church. Is the church recognizing and facing these realistic problems?

Farming on Right Path?

• A discussion of the question "Is Modern Agriculture on the Right Path?" by Paul K. Keene, a farmer in Eastern Pennsylvania, is published in pamphlet form by the School of Living, Suffern, N. Y., at 15c per single copy postpaid. The sub-title is "A Quest for a Finer Rural Culture."

Heifers Arrive in Porto Rico

• The latest information from the Brethren Service Committee, Elgin, Illinois, indicates that 1000 heifers are now tagged for post-war reconstruction abroad. News also comes to the effect that the first shipment of heifers has arrived in Porto Rico. On landing each heifer was immediately taken by truck to the home of a farmer selected by the Farm Security Administration.

Farmers become owners of the cows by paying the Farm Security Administration for the costs of transportation. The heifers were contributed by the members of the Church of the Brethren. Wayne Hostetler, a farmer in Southern Ohio, went with the shipment and will visit the families who received the heifers.

Eighteen heifers were originally sent. One was left in Mobile, Alabama, on account of illness; one died on the high seas; three calves were born during the trip.

A statement that went with the heifers read in part as follows: "We recognize this gift as infinitesimal compared to the need which we seek to serve, but it is an expression of the historic purposes of the Brethren people and we hope that it may be a bond of friendship and goodwill among the peoples who make up the citizenship of our nations."

Course in Community Relationships

• The Dubuque Presbyterian Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, announces a course in community relationships November 2 through December 17. Sessions are to be held at the Seminary. The offering is made in cooperation with the Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa.

Classes meet Tuesday through Friday, from 1:20 to 3:15 P.M. Each week's work is a complete unit. Those attending may enroll for the entire course, or for any of the separate units.

Rural ministers are among the community leaders who are urged to attend. Others expected are Farm Bureau officers, 4-H Club leaders, County Extension Directors, school teachers and administrators, Sunday school teachers and officers, recreational leaders and lay leaders.

Leaders announced for the course will be Rt. Rev. Monsignor L. G. Ligutti, W. H. Yoder, William Tudor, Barton Morgan, Winifred Martin, W. H. Stacy, Ray Wakeley, and Calvin T. Schnucker.

Registration blanks may be obtained on application to Mr. Schnucker, Dubuque Presbyterian Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa.

Seminars on Normal Living

• At Oberlin Seminary this summer a group of twenty persons—young rural ministers, teachers and members of Civilian Public Service Camps—met for sixteen three-hour seminars on Normal Living under the direction of Ralph Borsodi, founder of The School of Living, and author of "This Ugly Civilization."

It was agreed that a movement toward the decentralization of production, population, ownership, control, government and education is necessary as the right direction and the first step for the achievement of normal living.

Rev. George Crenshaw and Rev. William Stewart of North Fairfield, O., instituted the seminars for guidance in their effort to reshape the institutions of their community toward normal living, a project on which they are already at work. Mr. Crenshaw said: "We are starting a work for at least the next three generations. Mr. Borsodi, in my opinion, has the answer to the confusion of the human race in terms of action."

A forty-page summary of the seminars can be had for 50c from Mrs. Mildred Jensen Loomis, Lane's End Homestead, Brookville, O.

Methodist Appointment

• The Methodist Board of Missions announces the appointment of Miss Noreen Dunn as Executive Secretary of the Bureau of Town and Country Work, Woman's Division of Christian Service. Miss Dunn succeeds Mrs. J. W. Downs, who has retired after devoted service in the cause of the rural church. Miss Dunn has recently been a member of the faculty of Scarritt College.

Co-op Freedom Fund

• With $25,000 already pledged, a drive to raise funds for the relief and reconstruction of cooperators and cooperatives in the war-torn areas of the world has been started, Wallace J. Campbell, director of the Freedom Fund Campaign, 167 West 12th St., New York, N. Y., announced yesterday.

Heading the campaign in this country will be the Committee on International Cooperative Reconstruction of the Cooperative League composed of Howard A. Cowden, president of Consumers Cooperative Association; L. E. Woodcock, manager of the Eastern Cooperative Wholesale, and Dr. James P. Warbasse, president emeritus of the Cooperative League.

The organizations that already have pledged funds are the Consumers Cooperative Association, No. Kansas City, $10,000; the Midland Cooperative Wholesale, Minneapolis, $10,000, and the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau Cooperative Association, Harrisburg, $5,000.

Cooperative Village

• The Midland Cooperative Wholesale of Minneapolis announces that it has bought the whole village of Burkhardt, near Hudson, Wisconsin, on the Minnesota border. It plans to establish there a completely cooperative village. Certain of the production units of Midland Wholesale will be operated at Burkhardt. Midland reports a current volume of business of $9,000,000 through serving 150,000 families. It was organized in 1926.

Victory Corps Cadets

• The Jewish Agricultural Society, New York, arranged for intensive ten-day training courses for urban youth who helped to harvest the crops this summer and fall.

Book Reviews

The Gospel in Action. By Henry W. McLaughlin. John Knox Press, Richmond, 1944. 133 pp. $1.00. (Rates on quantities.)

This is a volume on Sunday School methods, broadly interpreted, with particular reference to extending the usefulness of the Sunday School to the entire community. The author has drawn heavily on the experience of his own denomination and that of the Southern Baptist for illustrative material.

The volume will be helpful, not only as a guide to enlarging the scope of service by the Sunday School to the local community, but also as a stimulus to such service. The fact that some 70 million of our population *not* being served by Sunday Schools is a real challenge to the Christian Church.

Dr. McLaughlin has long directed the rural work of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S., a denomination with many rural members and churches. He knows intimately the situation of the small rural school. He always writes with the actual situation in mind.

—Paul L. Vogt

The Indian in American Life. By G. E. E. Lindquist. New York, Friendship Press, 1944. Cloth, $1.00; Paper, 60c.

This interesting interpretation of recent developments in Indian affairs was prepared with the collaboration of Erna Gunther, John H. Holst, and Flora W. Seymour. Dr. Mark A. Dawber writes the foreword. Dr. Lindquist writes out of long experience. He also writes with "the educated heart." He now represents the Home Missions Council of North America in many of its contacts on the field.

The book opens with the story of the contribution of the American Indians to the current war effort. It goes on to give details about many of the recent changes taking place in the life of the Indians. For one thing, it is pointed out that the American Indians are not a homogeneous people. Numerous illustrations are given of the various cultures of the Indian people.

There is a discriminating consideration of Indian-White relationships, including frank comments about current anomalies. Progress being made by Indians in modern agriculture is described.

Then come stories about the Indian schools, with due emphasis upon the influence of missions, and a description of the present trends and undertakings. The important rôles of the Christian churches in Indian life, including such matters as medical missions, are adequately described. The book closes with a penetrating discussion of the Indians' part in the world of tomorrow. Here Dr. Lindquist declares that the leaven of Christianity is indispensable.

The book forms part of the Missionary Education Series for 1944-45. The themes for this year are the American Indian and Southeast Asia.

—B.Y.L.

Paul E. Doran

• Rev. Paul E. Doran, one of the well-known rural ministers and church administrators of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., died June 26 at Sparta, Tennessee. His life was devoted to the rural parish. He had recognition of his work several years ago with an article in the *Reader's Digest.* He attended the Columbus Convocation. We of the rural church fellowship mourn his loss. During thirty years of service, Dr. Doran had served four pastorates with distinction. May his life and work inspire many others.

The Great American Exodus

• The Joint Division of Education and Cultivation, Board of Missions and Church Extension, Methodist Church, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N. Y., publishes a leaflet under the title above, which gives in graphic form information about "the displacement of the population of the United States since Pearl Harbor."

Bible Conference Work in Rural Churches

• "Twelve local church Bible Conferences this summer." That is the record of Williamsport District, Central Pennsylvania Methodist Conference. All of them were held in rural, or small town, churches.

One year ago the District Superintendent, Dr. Elvin Clay Myers, held a coaching conference at Flemington, Penna., to train a group of his ministers to conduct Bible Conference in rural areas. The Adult Division of the General Board of Education and the Department of Town and Country Work, the Board of Missions and Church Extension, shared in bearing the expenses for the Conference and providing leadership. Each pastor coached to do the work agreed to hold two Bible Conferences within the year. These men are going at their work with determination and a fine spirit of enthusiasm.

The Conferences held have resulted in 109 new decisions to become regular Bible readers; 10 family altars; 2 professions of faith and Church membership; 48 calls in homes of people by the Bible Conference worker, 59 calls by volunteer laymen, and 5 special meetings. Twelve books of the Bible have been studied in the Conferences, besides studies have been made of "How We Got Our Bible," "The Prophets," "The Parables of Jesus" and "The Major Teachings of the Bible."

—A. J. Walton

Vermont Church Project

• The United Church of Johnson, Vermont, whose membership is made up of Methodists and Congregationalists, carried out a project which enabled its people to take as guests seventy-nine Negro children from crowded Harlem in New York. The children were entertained in the homes of white families of all faiths. The Abyssinian Baptist Church of New York paid the transportation costs. The project was worked out by the Vermont minister, Rev. A. Ritchie Low. The minister of the Harlem church is Dr. A. Clayton Powell, who is a member of the City Council.

The Church and the Grass Roots

ARTHUR CAPPER

I BELIEVE in the individual, in the dignity of the individual, the soul of the individual. This conception of what it is all about finds its spiritual strength in the Christian faith; finds its expression of that strength in the Christian church, which is the Defender of that Faith.

It is close to the grass roots that this conception of the individual as an individual is strongest and most deep seated. It is close to the grass roots also that the individual has the clearest perception of the forces of Nature: and of man's dependence upon Nature and the Supreme Being who created these forces, and who presumably guides them.

If mankind is to preserve the soul and the dignity of the individual, and not have both of these lost in the mass where the individual is only a cell in that mass organism, it will be through the work alliance of the Church and those who live close to the grass roots.

—From an address by SENATOR CAPPER on *The Church in Action Series*, National Broadcasting Company, in cooperation with the Federal Council of Churches.

Books About Oberlin

On a recent trip I took a spare hour to inquire at Oberlin, Ohio, whether Oberlin College, named after John Frederick Oberlin, had made a collection of books on the life of this singularly successful country preacher.

Imagine my surprise when the librarian came carrying a great armful of books and pamphlets, thirty-seven in all. (And there were others on the shelf) I had read Beard's life of Oberlin, and Dawson's recent biography as well as two volumes written over a century ago. But, I had never dreamed that so much had been written about this man. These works varied in type from small pamphlets to Leinhardt's "La Vie De J. F. Oberlin 1740-1826, De D. E. Stoeber" which runs to 526 pages.

Some were written in French, some in German and others in English. The publishers include The Religious Tract Society, The Presbyterian Board of Publication, The Society For the Promotion of Popular Instruction, and by many others. Some have printed for profit but others as benevolent ventures. A few volumes are amply illustrated.

How astounding, and yet how satisfying, to think that a humble country preacher, a man great in ability and personality, who for fifty-nine years labored in an isolated rural community, on another continent, should be the subject of so much writing. Few men are so long remembered and few so much beloved by successive generations.

We are in debt to Oberlin College for having made such an extensive collection. I wish that more seminaries and colleges, could do likewise, as a means of informing students and pastors of the activities and influence of this country pastor.

MARK RICH

A Prayer for All Engaged in Agriculture

• Almighty God, Lord of Heaven and Earth, in Whom we live and move and have our being; hear Thy people who call upon Thee; bless and prosper the labors of all who toil in the cultivation of the land, and grant that in due season we may gather in an abundant harvest, giving thanks unto Thee, to Whom the earth belongeth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen—*Industrial Christian Fellowship, London.*

FSA Health Program

• The group health plan begun by the Farm Security Administration now reaches 101,098 families having 528,094 members. These medical care plans are in effect in 1,120 counties.

Church in Action

• On August 6, the Church in Action Series of the National Broadcasting Company was devoted to the church in the rural community. Participants were Rev. George B. Gilbert, of the Protestant Episcopal Parish, Middletown, Conn.; Dr. Mark Rich; Miss Margaret J. Harris, now of the Home Missions Council staff, formerly of the larger parish centering at Van Hornesville, N. Y. The moderator was Rev. Bradford S. Abernethy, of the Federal Council.

Change of Address

• Experience indicates that many subscribers are failing to notify us about changes of address. If you are changing your address, please notify us promptly. A postcard will do.

Contributors

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Contributions Wanted

• Every reader is a potential contributor of material for this paper.

We need three types of material:

(1) Articles of about 900 words (to fill a page), descriptive of a local program.

(2) Short iems; news, plans, publications available.

(3) Illustrations; glossy photos, line drawings, cuts of rural scenes.

Circulars Available

• Quantities of circulars describing TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH are available without charge to any reader. Simply drop us a post card letting us know how many copies you would like to distribute.